



Nevada Certified Drinking Water Operator's Forum

Hosted by: Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City, NV 89701

Meeting Minutes March 10, 2010, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Location: Nevada Rural Water Association Annual Conference
Grand Sierra Resort, Reno
Conference Center Rooms "Nevada 8, 9 & 10"

1. Call To Order and Introductions (Chairman Cameron McKay)
Chairman McKay called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Members present: Cameron McKay (KGID), John Hulett (WCDWR), Harvey Johnson (IVGID), Bob Foerster (NRWA)

Members absent: Chet Auckley (S.E.E. Company, LLC), Lynn Forsberg (Elko County), Marcellus Jones (Vice Chairman/LVVWD)

Representing the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW): Jennifer Carr, Bureau Chief; Duncan Wright, Environmental Scientist, and Nan Paulson, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Ron Penrose (TMWA), Delite Travis (AWWA), and many operators who were attending the Conference

2. Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2009 – Action Item

Harvey Johnson made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Bob Foerster seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

3. Announcements (Chairman Cameron McKay)

Chairman McKay announced that Marcellus Jones will be stepping down from being Vice Chairman. Marcellus works in a large water system and has a lot of knowledge that will be missed.

Chet Aukley has been on the Advisory Board since 1991 and was very influential in getting regulations enacted for mandatory certification of water operators. Chet has also been dedicated to the education of operators and active in working with the Legislature regarding statutes.

Chairman McKay presented Certificates of Appreciation to both (in abstentia).

4. Members' March 2010 Term Expirations, New Member Selection – Action Item

Chairman McKay addressed new member selection for Forum due to the expiration of two terms. He requested input and said anyone can sit on the Advisory Forum.

a. Marcellus Jones – "Large Urban Water System" Representative:

Southern Nevada offers a lot of resources to tap into for large systems. The southern operators have a lot of training because of the SNWA educational classes. There are many AWWA and NRWA members.

b. Rotation of Chair & Vice-Chair

The Chairman opened the discussion for rotation of members. Harvey Johnson said two resumes were submitted. John Hulett added that two applicants had strong backgrounds, one from the SNWA in treatment, and one from the LVVWD in distribution. Cameron McKay mentioned they both were members of the AWWA.

Harvey Johnson made a motion to approve both applicants, John Hulett seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Chairman McKay made a motion to nominate Harvey Johnson as the next chairman, and John Hulett as the Vice-Chair. Bob Foerster seconded the motion. All were in favor.

5. Operator Renewal Schedule & December Bottleneck (Cameron McKay & Jennifer Carr)

Cameron McKay discussed the difficulties with renewals this past December. He talked about having the Legislature rewrite the renewal dates to quarterly renewals. If this were to occur, then the December test could be reimplemented.

Jennifer Carr discussed shifting the renewal deadline by a month, or having them due according to grade. She added that this would be a regulation change that would affect over 1300 operators. Cameron confirmed this and said changes will require public hearings. It is a very involved process.

The renewals would still be for two years but could be due June and December, or March and October. Renewals cannot conflict with exam applications. She asked for feedback from the audience and the Forum. One suggestion was to break down the renewal dates by grade, such as Treatment or Distribution. Another idea was to combine grades according to the number of renewals. Example: T-4 and D-1 because there are not many T-4 operators but there are many D-1 operators.

Cameron McKay replied to a question about the changing of renewal dates. He stated that if an operator was required to renew prior to their date due, a reimbursement would need to be made. He added that no one should lose any money with proposed changes. Another option would be to prorate toward a future renewal.

Continuing with the topic of renewals, Jennifer stated that she appreciated the patience of operators when calling to ask about their applications. This has been a difficult year with Steve Brockway's retirement, hiring and training of Duncan Wright, and changing to a new computer program.

Jennifer responded to a suggestion of electronic application forms. She said that because we do not have a two way internet capability, the operators have to print the applications, fill them out, and then mail or fax them in. The State does have an e-payment system enabled that allows for last minute payments. Applications can be faxed in when e-payments are made. There have been problems with epayments when numbers are not entered correctly so entries must be made carefully.

Duncan Wright said that operators need to take personal responsibility with getting their applications in on time and having them filled out correctly. It is similar to renewing their driver's license. There is no grace period.

Chairman Harvey Johnson mentioned the time was running out so the comments needed to be wrapped up. There were no further comments so he moved on to Item 6.

6. Cross Connection Program & Regulations (Jennifer Carr)

Lynn Forsberg mentioned that training and certification is difficult for the Eastern side of Nevada. Hawthorne Ordinance states the AWWA must do the training. There needs to be more training in the rural areas from the AWWA. It would be easier than changing regulations.

Mr. Forsberg added that the sub-committee that was formed at the September meeting to look into the American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA) had completed its report. The report will be added to the minutes. A recommendation will be made to approve ABPA certification or put a regulation in at NDEP's discretion.

Jennifer Carr said she is sensitive to the Committee and requested feedback regarding a regulation change. Bob Foerster said the sub-committee took regulations from surrounding states, and that lead to the recommendation.

Cameron McKay mentioned that the AWWA class is a 40 hour certification class that can be ABPA approved. The classes are good for two years. Delite Travis from the AWWA affirmed that a certification test can be taken within two years after having the 40 hour backflow course. Jennifer Carr stated that only the AWWA is approved to train for operators to become certified in cross connection.

Responding to the question of how long a backflow course certificate is good for, Delite Travis said that once the course is taken, the operator has up to two years to test.

A participant in the audience stated their opinion as having NDEP set guidelines that should be standard for all operators and NDEP should not be involved. Another operator mentioned that county ordinances would have to be changed, and that some large cities, like New York and San Francisco, require testing for their cities.

Scott Todt from Incline Village GID brought up a need to ensure competency for the jurisdiction. Cameron McKay remarked that the existing authority cannot be allowed to deteriorate.

Chief Carr discussed setting a standard and allowing the municipalities handle the training. At this time the Hawthorne ordinance says the AWWA is the training authority. In California, operators must prove competency to the jurisdiction. It would be best to have more training in the rural areas from the AWWA versus changing the regulations. One option to look into would be to have part of the training on-line and the rest as hands on.

An operator from the audience asked if training could be made via video conferencing, as it would be easier for operators. Mike Ariztia from Sun Valley GID said he would like to see centralized testing.

Cameron McKay brought up the IACET Standards. AWWA class is approved and can be used toward grades 3 and 4. An operator said that USC goes to Southern Nevada to teach. Delite Travis said the AWWA is willing to travel to teach if there is enough interest in the Backflow training.

Chairman Harvey Johnson announced the meeting time was ending and asked for a conclusion for that discussion. Chief Carr added that ideas can be sent through emails and at work.

7. Member's Open Comments

Chairman Harvey asked for member comments. Cameron McKay asked about renewal processing and if the same CEUs can be used for Treatment and Distribution. Jennifer Carr said that Steve Brockway maintained that each had to have separate training. Ms. Carr added that if an operator has a Full and an OIT in the same type of certification (example: distribution), that operator must have separate CEUs for each certificate held.

Mike Ariztia asked about cross-over questions, as they are asked in exams. Jennifer said the training must have enough hours for each certificate. Mike furthered his inquiry with stating that Steve used to say that training for pipes, valves, and trenching was only permitted for Distribution. Mike contended that the Wastewater Conference taught on those items and he felt some should be allowed for both Treatment and Distribution.

Duncan Wright said the vast majority of the operators have separate hours for each. Some of the training has been split for Treatment and Distribution. Duncan added that Safety courses can be used for both.

Jennifer mentions that two post-secondary courses for T-3 were ok for D-3.

Cameron McKay interjected that the meeting needed to close and he apologized that there was no time left for item numbers 8- Public comments or 9- Upcoming Meetings. Delite Travis said she had some Workforce materials on the tables.

10. Adjourn:

Cameron McKay made a motion to adjourn. _____ **seconded the motion.**

Reminder to Certified Operators: You are eligible to receive renewal contact hours for attendance at Operator Forum Meetings and the Nevada Water and Wastewater Training Coalition Meetings!